

SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Page 6, please change the paragraph beginning at line 11 to read --

Apart from these considerations which arise in practice, mention should be made of publications which are relevant. For example Okada et al describes for the RH process, i.e. the vacuum circulation process, also known as the Rheinstahl-Heraeus process, the acceleration of the decarbonization reaction below a bath carbon content of 20 ppm by blowing pulverulent iron oxide (Fe_2O_3) by means of a top lance into the melt. The iron oxide particles which are blown into the melt serve on the one hand as nuclei for the formation of CO bubbles and on the other hand as oxygen carriers for the decarbonization processes. Ladle pressures (1-2 Torr, 1.3-2.6 mbar) and lance spacings from the upper surface of the melt (3 m) must be so selected that a sufficiently deep penetration of the pulverulent material into the melt is ~~nsur-d~~ ensured. The particle sizes of the --

Page 7, replace the paragraph beginning with line 16 to read --

U.S. Patent 6,235,084 B1 describes an aluminothermal heating process during the RH treatment. The decarbonization is carried out under vacuum in a first stage in which oxygen is blown in and then a composite metallic substance like, for example, aluminum powder is introduced. The solid reaction product Al_2O_3 , which is thereby dispersed in the melt can serve as the nuclei former for CO bubbles in the subsequent decarbonization stage. As a result the decarbonization speed is increased and the decarbonization duration is reduced. --

Page 11 replace the paragraph beginning with line 17 to read --

Because of the acceleration of the degassing process, the degassing duration can be shortened for a given final content of the gases in the steel. As a consequence the productivity of the apparatus can be increased and this contributes to an increase in the specific life of the ~~r~~-fractory refractory lining of the --

Page 13, replace the paragraph beginning with line 15 to read --

The tests were made on a 265 metric ton RH apparatus to investigate the acceleration of the decarbonization process with ultralow carbon products at the lowest carbon levels. The pieces introduced into the melt at the starting phase of the decarbonization were pieces of iron or which were continuously added by a vibrating trough from a vacuum bunker at a pressure in the treatment vessel greater than 2 mbar but not exceeding 5 mbar. The [[f ed]] feed rate was 40 kg/min. The size of the positions of the iron ore were between 3 and 10 mm. The melt was sampled --